

# OPM & OMB Announce Unprecedented Hiring Reforms

*Measures Cut Previous Red Tape Clogging the Federal Hiring System; Allow Government to Leverage Technology and Private Sector Best Practices*

**Washington, DC** - Today, Director John Berry of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management and U.S. Chief Performance Officer Jeffrey Zients announced a major overhaul of the Federal hiring process, detailing crucial reforms ordered by President Obama. Speaking at OPM headquarters alongside Department of Labor Secretary Hilda Solis and Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan, Berry detailed President Obama's initiative to bring a 21st Century approach to the Federal hiring system. The announcement was made before an audience including high-ranking officials from the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, and Veterans Affairs, as well as Federal employees and private sector human resource experts. This announcement came shortly after President Obama issued a memorandum to Federal agencies directing them to overhaul their hiring procedures within 180 days.

"Federal workers fill crucial roles that defend Americans from terrorism, infectious diseases, food-borne pathogens, forest fires and countless other threats. We can't afford delays in filling these jobs, nor can we rely on a system that causes qualified candidates to give up in frustration. President Obama and I believe that we must cut the red tape clogging the Federal hiring process in order to bring aboard outstanding applicants quickly," OPM Director John Berry said at the announcement event. "President Obama has undertaken a series of reforms today that aren't so much steps, as leaps forward. I understand the frustration of every applicant who previously has had to wade through the arcane Federal hiring process. If qualified applicants want to serve our country through the Federal service, then our application process should facilitate that. These reforms are concrete, broad, and will help us do just that. They honor core merit system principles and the sacrifice of the men and women serving our country by preserving their veteran's preference. And, these reforms will save the American taxpayer money and free up scarce resources that will allow Federal agencies to better serve our nation."

"The best talent doesn't wait around for 140 days - they find another job," said **Chief Performance Officer Jeff Zients**. "We need to streamline our hiring process to make it more competitive and candidate-friendly. Across twenty years in the private sector, I've seen that the best performing organizations focus on people as their most important tool for improving performance. It is time for the federal government to start doing the same."

"These steps taken by President Obama align the Federal workforce with the best practices of the private sector in terms of recruiting and hiring talent," said **Department of Labor Secretary Hilda Solis**. "These reforms are straightforward and simplify the process for job applicants seeking to serve their country."

"We should be encouraging the best candidates to enter Federal service, rather than dissuading them through an outdated, lengthy process that leaves both applicants and hiring managers frustrated," said **Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan**. "The President's reforms give me the tools I need to reduce the red tape in our Department. The ability to process and assess applicants more efficiently saves the American taxpayer money."

At the announcement event, Director Berry outlined steps that President Obama has taken to reform the Federal hiring and recruitment process.

## **In his Memorandum, President Obama directed Federal agencies to:**

- Dramatically reduce the time between when a job is announced and is filled.
- Eliminate essay-s as an initial application requirement. Essays may still be used later in the process. Under the previous system, if an individual applied for five separate Federal jobs, he or she often needed to complete five separate sets of lengthy essays.
- Use shorter, plain-language job announcements.
- Accept resumes from applicants, instead of requiring them to submit complex applications through outdated systems.
- Allow hiring managers to choose from among a group of best qualified candidates, rather than

limiting their choice to just three names, through expanded use of "category ratings."  
Notify applicants in a timely manner (and at four points in the process) through USAJobs.gov - eliminating the "black hole" that applicants often feel they when they get no response to their application.  
Submit a hiring and recruitment plan for top talent to OPM by the end of this year.  
Have all Cabinet-level and Senior Administration Officials visiting universities or colleges on official business incorporate time to discuss career opportunities in the Federal service with students.

**Additionally, the President directed OPM to:**

Design a government-wide plan for recruiting and hiring qualified, diverse talent.  
Review the Federal Career Intern Program and, within 90 days, offer a recommendation to the President on its future and on providing effective pathways into the Federal service for college students and graduates.  
Work with agencies to ensure that best practices are being developed and used throughout Government.

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management is also launching a web site that will continue to guide Federal agencies and hiring managers through this change at: <http://www.opm.gov/hiringreform/> .

For complete details on hiring reform - including additional measures taken by President Obama and the Office of Personnel Management, a Video News Release and webcast of the entire press conference, please visit <http://www.opm.gov/>.

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*Our Mission is to Recruit, Retain and Honor a World-Class Workforce to Serve the American People.*

Source: <http://www.opm.gov/news/opm-omb-announce-unprecedented-hiring-reforms,1562.aspx>

05/11/2010



The Director

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Washington, DC 20415

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

From: John Berry  
Director

Subject: Comprehensive Recruitment and Hiring Reform, Implementation of the President's Memorandum of May 11, 2010

President Obama's Memorandum dated May 11, 2010, Improving the Federal Recruitment and Hiring Process, <http://www.opm.gov/HiringReform/>, is part of the Administration's comprehensive initiative to address major, long-standing impediments to recruiting and hiring the best and the brightest into the Federal civilian workforce. The Memorandum is based on issues that you and your managers have brought to the attention of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and it is designed to help you and your agencies build the workforce you need to achieve your goals.

The Presidential Memorandum launches the Obama Administration's flagship personnel policy reform initiative. It builds on a nearly year-long collaboration between OPM and agencies aimed at recruiting top talent and streamlining the hiring process, especially for mission-critical jobs. Agencies have already taken significant strides to map their current hiring process, identify barriers and put in place action plans to streamline and improve the way they hire.

Building on these efforts, the President's initiative challenges agencies and OPM to focus on three key objectives to further reform the hiring process:

1. Initiating a vigorous Government-wide recruiting effort that makes it easier for Americans to apply for Federal jobs while also raising the bar on candidate quality;
2. Giving managers and supervisors a greater leadership role in recruiting and selecting candidates with support from their agency human resources offices; and
3. Monitoring agency efforts to improve the speed and quality of hiring and the

satisfaction of managers and applicants with the hiring experience.

These reforms take a commonsense approach to the overall hiring process. They rigorously adhere to the merit system principles upon which the civil service is grounded. Following on the President's Veterans Employment Initiative of November 2009, this reform package honors the sacrifice and commitment of our veterans by safeguarding their rights under law.

Successful implementation of these reforms will help each agency achieve its objectives for the American people, but these reforms will not succeed without strong leadership from the top. The President's initiative sets a new course with clear objectives and detailed guidance, followed by continuous two-way communication between your agency and OPM; you will receive expert support at each step along the way.

### **OPM Assistance**

OPM's number one goal over the next year is to provide agencies a full range of support to help them meet the President's ambitious recruitment and hiring reform objectives. Here are some examples of the kind of support OPM has planned over the next six months:

- Hiring Reform Web Page: This newly created site will contain the latest information, news, and media releases about hiring reform. It will have a section called "HR to HR" designed for human resources professionals to share information and highlight successful practices. The site will also provide policy, guidance and training materials to help agencies meet each of the requirements established by the President's memorandum. Please go to <http://www.opm.gov/HiringReform/> for the latest information on hiring reform.
- Collaborative Network/Community of Practice: OPM has established a reform-focused collaborative space for agencies on OMB's MAX site, which we are calling Hiring Reform '10. You can access this site at <https://max.omb.gov/community/x/boB5Gw>. If you are not yet a member of MAX, please follow the directions for registering so that you can benefit from the full range of hiring reform information, collaboration, and shared innovation in a "closed" Federal-employee only environment.
- Targeted Agency Support: Last year OPM led SWAT teams through an evaluation of agency hiring practices. That effort yielded critical information about the challenges agencies face in trying to improve their recruiting and hiring. By June 4, agencies will also have identified specific areas where they need the most help. OPM will use all of this information to target support for agencies to help them implement the President's reform agenda. If you would like to see the current analysis of Agency SWAT team results, go to the MAX site under Hiring Reform '10.

- Mobile Assistance Teams (MATs): As a complement to the targeted assistance described above, OPM has assembled several Mobile Assistance Teams, made up of experienced OPM and agency staff, with expertise in recruiting, staffing, and related human resources areas. The MATs are ready to offer skilled, hands-on assistance and expert guidance to help agencies meet the President's hiring reform goals. A description of what each MAT will handle, along with the OPM MAT-team leads are available at both the Hiring Reform website and the Hiring Reform '10 MAX site.
- Communication and Training: OPM will offer training, education and communication in a variety of formats. Here are some examples:
  - "Bite-size" awareness training: OPM is designing a series of "bite-size" training sessions for busy HR professionals and hiring managers. These sessions offer a basic overview of the President's memorandum and its requirements. For a quick look at a session we have already developed, please go to <https://hrmadesimple.golearnportal.org/>. We've started a series for the "Harried Professional," starting with Schedule A training for hiring managers.
  - Seminars: We will hold a series of in-depth training seminars for both human resources professionals and line managers. These sessions will offer "how-to" training and highlight lessons learned from successful agency practices.
  - "Do-It-Yourself" Training Material: OPM has prepared talking points, PowerPoint slides, and other instructional material that HR professionals and hiring managers can use to discuss hiring reform throughout their agencies.
  - o Frequently Asked Questions (Q&As): OPM has prepared a set of Questions and Answers to help agencies carry out the President's reform requirements and improve their recruitment and hiring programs. We have grouped the Q&As under broad categories that track along with the President's Memorandum and will make these available on our Hiring Reform web page.

In addition to drawing on OPM for help, agencies should continue to use their previously identified SWAT team members to implement hiring reforms. These teams have already done excellent diagnostic work around hiring reform and are a ready-made resource to drive further progress.

### **Key Deliverables**

To ensure the President's agenda is accomplished by November 1, 2010, the following key deliverables for OPM and agencies apply:

#### OPM

- a. May 12, 2010. MATs available to provide Agency-specific assistance. The

MAT leaders and areas of responsibility are found at: <http://www.opm.gov/HiringReform/> and <https://max.omb.gov/community/x/boB5Gw>

- b. May 12 – May 26, 2010. OPM Hiring Reform Implementation Senior Leadership Team available to help Agencies with on-site awareness and education. Requests for assistance can be made directly to Ms. Angela Bailey at [angela.bailey@opm.gov](mailto:angela.bailey@opm.gov).
- c. May 15, 2010. Delineation of measures to monitor success and outline agency reporting requirements at <http://www.opm.gov/HiringReform/>.
- d. May 24, 2010. Comprehensive list of FAQs addressing key areas of reform available at <http://www.opm.gov/HiringReform/>.
- e. May 31, 2010. Training courses available on continuous process improvement (CPI) and action planning.
- f. June 7, 2010. “Bite-size” hiring reform awareness training available for agencies to use/share. Available at <http://www.opm.gov/HiringReform/>.
- g. June 10, 2010. “Do it yourself” hiring reform material to help agencies raise awareness about hiring reform and answer the inevitable “what’s in it for me,” questions from managers and HR professionals. This material will be available at: <http://www.opm.gov/HiringReform/>
- h. June 14, 2010. Agency Implementation Checklist available for Agencies to use to ensure they are ready for implementation on November 1, 2010. This checklist will be available at <http://www.opm.gov/HiringReform/> and <https://max.omb.gov/community/x/boB5Gw>.
- i. October 2010. Human Resources Dashboard updated to include agency-level data on hiring speed; applicant satisfaction with the hiring process; and hiring manager satisfaction with the quality of new employees and the overall hiring process. OPM will provide monthly reports on the key stages of the application process.

#### Agencies

- a. May 21, 2010. Identify a senior official accountable for leading the agency implementation of these reforms. You may send this information directly to Ms. Angela Bailey at [angela.bailey@opm.gov](mailto:angela.bailey@opm.gov).
- b. May 21, 2010. Identify an agency point of contact to work directly with OPM on key messages and deliverables. You may send this information directly to Ms. Angela Bailey at [angela.bailey@opm.gov](mailto:angela.bailey@opm.gov).
- c. June 4, 2010. Provide Agency Assistance Request (Attached) to OPM, identifying areas of specialized need. This will allow OPM to target its MATs to the appropriate agencies/issues. Please post this information on the MAX community site at <https://max.omb.gov/community/x/boB5Gw>.
- d. August 1, 2010. Submit updated Agency Hiring Reform Action Plan to OPM and OMB on the MAX community site at <https://max.omb.gov/community/x/boB5Gw>. The updated Action Plan should incorporate new activities addressing the President’s Memorandum initiatives,

including goals, targets, timelines and indicators of progress for hiring reform implementation. OPM will provide an Action Plan format that agencies are urged but not required to use. Agencies may use an alternate format if and only if it addresses all specified elements of information.

- e. September 1-30, 2010. Agencies meet with OPM and OMB to review submitted Action Plan and collaborate on ability to meet hiring reform objectives.
- f. October 1, 2010. Complete Agency Implementation Checklist and post to MAX community site at <https://max.omb.gov/community/x/boB5Gw>, certifying that the agency is ready to implement the hiring reform requirements by November 1, 2010.
- g. November 1, 2010. Implement the requirements in President Obama's Memorandum dated May 11, 2010, Improving the Federal Recruitment and Hiring Process.
- h. December, 2010. Each CHCO agency will meet with OPM and OMB twice annually and participate in a collaborative in-progress review to assess the status and progress of hiring reform as related to the President's directive guidance.

## **Conclusion**

Improving the way we recruit and hire is essential to building an effective and efficient Government that can deliver the best services to our citizens. Now is the time to address the systemic issues that have limited the effectiveness of recruitment and the hiring process. With these changes we can facilitate a world-class workforce.

We must prepare now for the number of retirees to rise substantially over the next few years and for increased hiring needs in critical functions. We have taken many steps toward facing these challenges. Our collective efforts will now help us realize immediate and long-term dividends in a stronger and more capable Federal workforce.

We at OPM look forward to working with you to achieve these results. Ms. Angela Bailey, Deputy Associate Director for Recruitment and Diversity, is my lead point of contact for the hiring reform initiatives, requirements and implementation assistance plans outlined in this letter. She can be reached at [angela.bailey@opm.gov](mailto:angela.bailey@opm.gov).

As witnessed this day by:

Hilda Solis  
Secretary of Labor

Shaun Donovan  
Secretary of Housing and Urban Development

Jeffrey Zients  
Deputy Director  
Office of Management and Budget

Scott Gould  
Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs

John Pocari  
Deputy Secretary of Transportation

Dr. Clifford Stanley  
Under Secretary of Defense

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